**BIBLE TALK Radio Broadcast**

**On KTTR (99.7 FM) Every Sunday at 8:30 a.m.**

**Rolla, Missouri**

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**Why Do People Not Believe? Pt. 1**

Thank you and good morning. Welcome to our program.

Paul said in Romans 1:19-20, *“because what may be known of God is manifest in them, for God has shown it to them. For since the creation of the world His invisible attributes are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made, even His eternal power and Godhead, so that they are without excuse.”* Notice, the invisible attributes of God are *“clearly seen.”* How? – by looking at the things that are made. It is possible for us to clearly see God by looking at the world around us. Psalms 19:1-2 says, *“The heavens declare the glory of God; And the firmament shows His handiwork. Day unto day utters speech, And night unto night reveals knowledge.”* What this is saying is that everyone can see God if they will honestly look. The universe and the world around us are speaking to us that there is a God and this speech can be heard by anyone who chooses to hear.

And the Bible also says that God requires us to believe in Him if we are to please Him. Hebrews 11:6 says, *“But without faith it is impossible to please Him, for he who comes to God must believe that He is, and that He is a rewarder of those who diligently seek Him.”* And it teaches that God holds us accountable if we choose not to believe. 2 Thessalonians 1:7-9 teaches that those who do not know God and who do not obey the gospel of Jesus Christ *“shall be punished with everlasting destruction from the presence of the Lord and from the glory of His power.”* There is also evidence that Jesus is whom He claimed to be, the Christ, the Son of the living God. Jesus said to the Jews, *“Therefore I said to you that you will die in your sins; for if you do not believe that I am He, you will die in your sins.”* (John 8:24)

God is a just God and He has never required of mankind what he is not able to do. Therefore, every accountable person is able to see the truth concerning God and concerning Jesus Christ.

So, why do people choose not to believe in God or in Christ? We can be assured that it is not because they have genuinely sought for the truth and as a result of their honest investigation of the truth they came to the conclusion there is no God and that Jesus is not the Son of God. No, anyone who honestly seeks for the truth will believe. There are other reasons why they do not believe. The focus of our lesson today, and next week, the Lord willing, is to look at some of the reasons why people refuse to believe in the existence of God, and in the deity of Jesus Christ.

First of all, some people do not believe because they have closed minds, and they refuse to look at the evidence. These people disbelieve because they are determined to do so. They will not even listen to the believer’s presentation of his case. This may be because they were raised this way. Their parents may have manifested this attitude toward such matters during their childhood. Perhaps they developed this attitude while under the influence of some unbelieving professor in college. For whatever reasons they have closed their minds to the possibility of believing in God and in Jesus Christ. Yet these same people who refuse to hear the evidence for our faith will readily listen to anyone who wants to criticize our faith in God and in Christ. Is this fair? Would it be fair to let a jury hear only one side of the case in criminal court? All we ask of these skeptics and unbelievers is to honestly look at the other side.

Secondly, people choose not to believe because of secularism. Secularism is an overemphasis on this natural world as opposed to the world to come. I like the way John H. Gerstner defines secularism when he says, “Secularism in simpler language is merely worldliness; or ‘this-worldliness’ in contrast to ‘other-worldliness.’ This one-world-at-a-time philosophy sees the future as an irrelevance, if not an impertinence. It supposes that one world in the hand is worth two in the bush. What does it profit a man if he saves his soul but loses the whole world?...” (John H. Gerstner in “Reasons for Faith,” quoted by Rubel Shelly in his book “Simple Studies in Christian Evidences”) American society has become more and more secular than when our nation began. Evidence of this is seen in our educational system. In early America religion and the Bible had a prominent place in school curriculum. The first colleges established in this country were set up by religious people and the Bible had a prominent place in the curriculum. By the coming of the twentieth century this was no longer true. Many educators today have taken the position that religion and formal education are simply incompatible. Thus beliefs in God and in the Bible are de-emphasized and are actually scoffed at and denounced as superstition in our public schools and in most colleges and universities in America today. In the place of teaching the Bible in these colleges and universities there is open indoctrination in atheism, naturalism, and secularism. No wonder that our society has become more secular in its beliefs and practices.

Secularism dehumanizes man and brings him down to the animal level. Secularism basically views man has a highly evolved animal. But we know there is a difference between animals and man. Animals can eat, drink, sleep and be contented, but man cannot. Man has spiritual longings which cannot be satisfied by purely satisfying man’s physical needs. Ecclesiastes 3:11 says, *“He has made everything beautiful in its time. Also He has put eternity in their hearts, except that no one can find out the work that God does from beginning to end.”* God puts eternity in our hearts. We have a longing for what is beyond the physical. While those who are secular in their thinking may scorn the notion of the world which lies beyond this one, that notion cannot be escaped. Where will you go when you die? We all have that question.

The secularists may not want to think about it, but he will die, and he will exist in eternity. The Bible is clear on this subject. Jesus said in John 5:28-29, *“Do not marvel at this; for the hour is coming in which all who are in the graves will hear His voice and come forth -- those who have done good, to the resurrection of life, and those who have done evil, to the resurrection of condemnation.”* In Matthew 25 Jesus presents to us the judgment scene. In verse 46 He says concerning the unrighteous*, “And these will go away into everlasting punishment, but the righteous into eternal life.”* The fact that Jesus was raised from the dead is evidence that there is a resurrection. All of us will stand before Christ in judgment.

The question I would ask the secularist is the question Jesus asked in Mark 8:36-37, *“For what will it profit a man if he gains the whole world, and loses his own soul? Or what will a man give in exchange for his soul?”*

Thirdly, another reason for unbelief is scientism. Scientism may be defined as the worship of science. It is the thinking that science will answer all our questions and solve all our problems.

Now, I am not saying that science is a bad thing. Science involves the finding of facts through observation and experimentation. Facts are a good thing. People of faith are not opposed to facts.

Also, the pursuits of science are ordained by God. God said to Adam and Eve, *“…fill the earth and subdue it; have dominion over the fish of the sea, over the birds of the air, and over every living thing that moves on the earth.”* (Gen. 1:28) God wants us to use what He has created for our good. Helpful medical advances that have helped to save the lives of many are the result of scientific pursuit. The conveniences of electrical lights, the automobile or the airplane, computers and smart phones are the result of science. The problem with scientific pursuit is not science itself but the people who use science. It is when people begin to think that science is the answer to all our problems. It is when they believe that science is the only means of gaining knowledge, i.e., when they begin to think that what is real are only those things which are able to be tasted, touched, heard or smelled. When a person comes to worship science and to believe only that which can be demonstrated to the five senses, he will certainly turn away from faith in God. Since God cannot be touched or seen, or weighed on a scale then He must not exist. But are physical things the only things that are real? We cannot see or taste love, but we do not deny love’s existence. We cannot put justice in a test tube, but we value justice and contend that all men should strive to exhibit this virtue in their dealings with each other. Spiritual persons and spiritual values are not capable of physical analysis, but they are nonetheless as real as rocks, trees and gold. Science is not the final standard of all that is real and true and morally right. It is too limited for that.

True science is in no way antagonistic to faith. As we mentioned earlier science involves the finding of facts and our faith is not afraid of facts. The truth is, Biblical faith is built upon facts proven by science. We read earlier from Roman 1:20 that the invisible things of God are clearly seen, being understood by the things that are made. As we look at the world around us we see evidence of God. By looking at, and observing the world around us (by means of the scientific method) we learn that 1) nothing comes from nothing, in other words every effect must have an adequate cause, and we learn that 2) the design characteristic of our world demands an Intelligent Designer. And so we believe in a God who created, even though we did not see Him do it. It is not a blind faith, but faith based on evidence, facts. Faith and science are not incompatible, but they are working together. Science then should not be a reason to disbelieve, but it is a reason TO BELIEVE.

Today we have been looking at reasons why people refuse to believe in God and in Jesus Christ. Some do not believe because they have closed their minds to an investigation of the truth. If that is you we urge you to be willing to honestly look at the other side. Others do not believe because of secularism. This is an emphasis on the natural world as opposed to the supernatural world. If this is you, we encourage you consider the evidence that there is more to this life than just the physical and natural part of man. Man is a spiritual being with spiritual longings. And still others refuse to believe because of the worship of science. While scientific pursuits have bettered our lives here, science is not able to solve all our problems. We would say to those who worship science to let science lead you to see the evidence for the existence of God. Next week, the Lord willing, I want to look at two other reason why people refuse to believe in God and in Christ. We hope you will join us next week.

But before we close I want to announce a special series of meetings during the week of Sept. 29th – Oct. 4th. The lessons presented in this series of meetings will be on the theme, “Growing to Spiritual Maturity.” The Christian has the responsibility to grow to spiritual maturity. These lessons will help us learn how to do that. So, mark on your calendar Sept. 29 thru Oct. 4th. Norman Sewell of Harrison, Arkansas, will be with us and will present these lessons. This series of meetings is sponsored by church of Christ in St. James. Our meeting house is located at 685 Sidney Street in St. James. We will meet on Sunday morning at 9:30 and 10:15, Sunday evening at 5:00 and then Monday through Friday of that week we will meet at 7:00 PM. Come and be with us. That’s Sept. 29- Oct. 4th.

We also want to invite you to check out our website. On this website you are able to hear sermons on a variety of Bible topics, and you also are able to hear previous Bible Talk radio broadcasts and download transcripts of the programs. The web address is sjchurchofchrist.com, that’s sjchurchofchrist.com.